

Byron Burris of WFFA in Dallas reports that the San Antonio Aerospace facility in Texas has hired 767 foreign airplane mechanics over the past 2 years without a real background check. These mechanics come from 45 countries, including Vietnam, Ethiopia, Egypt, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Jordan, China and Sudan. These people work on American airplanes.

The State Department says it does a "criminal" background check, but reports indicate those checks are of poor quality and sometimes are left up to a third party.

We are ignoring the obvious when it comes to airline safety. Foreign workers with shady or unknown backgrounds should not have access to American aircraft.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1515

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, just a moment ago I heard the minority whip profess interest in working with the Democrats to reform the health care system. Yet, I'm sad to say that the minority whip, the minority leader have been part of an effort to deal with fear and misrepresentation, attacking bipartisan legislation that would have done precisely that, reform the health care system.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, there are some here who simply are not expressing the sense of urgency that most of us feel from the American people, a sense of urgency about fixing a broken health care system that costs too much, that produces wildly uneven results, and leaves too many outside the system of coverage, and others, with health insurance, at risk. We cannot continue along this path. Americans are not getting the help they need, even if they have insurance coverage. I was, I must say, disappointed, to say the very least, to see the attack on bipartisan legislation that we have worked on to help reform the health care system.

In a statement from the minority leader, and with the whip, and Mr. McCOTTER, there is an allegation that somehow there is legislation in the

health care draft that may place senior citizens in situations where they feel pressured to sign end-of-life directives that they would not otherwise sign that may start us down a "treacherous path towards government-encouraged euthanasia if enacted into law."

Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Had the minority leader, and his whip, and the conference Chair bothered to check how that legislation came to be enacted into our health care legislation, they would have found out that it was work of a bipartisan group of Ways and Means Committee members. There were Republicans cosponsoring it along with Democrats. We had spirited discussion dealing with the fact that too often senior citizens and their families are not given the information they need to be able to cope with the most serious situation any of us will ever face as we have a loved one move into the end of his or her life.

We discussed how Medicare would pay for tests to hook people up, to poke them, to run them through machines, to have them on ventilators, to do all sorts of things; but it will not pay a health care professional to sit down with that patient, with that family, and let them know what they expect, answer their questions, help them know what their choices are. We had examples of committee members talk about their loved ones, and I would say, Republican committee members talk about how their loved ones didn't get that type of help at the end of life and actually were subjected to things that they thought were not in the best interests of their loved one. If they had a choice, they wouldn't have done it over again, and it didn't prolong their life, it actually made them less comfortable.

We're seeking to change that, to be able to adjust Medicare so that it speaks to the needs of American seniors and their families, that they're given the attention they need to prepare for this difficult period of time. There's nothing in this legislation that would force people to have consultations. There's nothing that would force them to sign advance directives. It's not going to choose a health care professional by the government and force it on them.

It's the type of sad, inflammatory rhetoric that suggests that people aren't serious about health care reform, not serious about meeting the needs of American families, but, rather, they're playing political games. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how disappointed I was to see this type of reaction to a carefully crafted piece of legislation that we've been working on for more than 6 months that is bipartisan and that speaks to the needs of American families.

The American public, especially our senior citizens, deserve our best efforts to meet their needs, not treat them like political footballs. I hope the Republican leadership will reconsider,

and that we'll be able to enact provisions like this to help our senior citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BEST PRODUCT FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, back in November, Hank Paulson, the Secretary of the Treasury, and President Bush came to Congress in a rush that the financial sky was going to fall out if we did not pass the TARP bill, the financial bailout for Wall Street. Now, we were told that if we didn't do it, that stock portfolios and savings of Americans all over the country would decrease, maybe as much as 30 or 40 percent. Well, in that spirit of panic that frequently happens in this town, we did pass TARP. And what happened to your IRA back home? What happened to your savings account? What happened to your stock portfolio? Unless you're extremely lucky and unusual, your assets dropped by 30 or 40 percent. So much for the \$700 billion bailout.

And then in January, President Obama, using the same panic tactic, came to us and said, we have got to pass a second stimulus program. Keep in mind we had already passed one under President Bush in May of 2008. But we had to pass, in a hurry, something big, something dramatic, \$790 billion for a stimulus program. Why? Because the unemployment rate was 8 percent. But this would give us immediate results, President Obama promised. And so that was passed by Congress.

And yet, now, unemployment is approaching 10 percent, and in States like Michigan, as high as 15 percent; 2½ million Americans have become unemployed since the passage of the stimulus program. And now we have the same Washington-knows-best experts telling us that we have to pass major health care reform by next week, August 1.

Now, I want you to think about this. This is 17 percent of the economy, and we would put it in the hands of the Federal Government. It would set up a scheme where there would be a health care czar that would run and stipulate insurance policies all over the country; and in order to sell insurance in the United States of America, you would have to go through this bureaucracy and enter into an exchange. And there, inside this closed circle defined by the Federal Government, you would compete against a government option